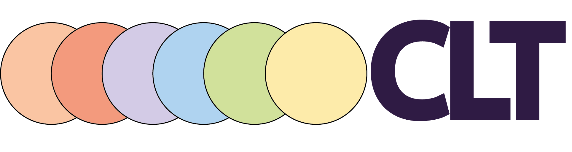
**Peer observation and enhancement of teaching For Leeds Beckett University colleagues teaching on apprenticeship programmes**

**October 2021**

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LEEDS BECKETT UNIVERSITY

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**Peer observation and enhancement of teaching for Leeds Beckett University colleagues teaching on degree apprenticeship programmes**

# Context and Background

## National context

Observation of Teaching contributes towards our professional development as teachers and is regarded as best practice for teaching. The Further Education and Skills Inspection Handbook states that inspection activity will include “direct observation of teaching, training and assessment” (Gov UK, 2021, para 128).

Peer observation for degree apprenticeship courses aligns and complements our existing culture of observation; which uses [peer support to enhance teaching](https://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/staffsite/services/centre-for-learning-and-teaching/educational-development/deap-networks/peer-support-for-teaching-enhancement-network/) in our portfolio of all existing undergraduate and postgraduate courses.

This LBU guidance also aligns with the Higher Education Academy’s (HEA, 2006) rationale for academics being observed and observing teaching:

* To enhance the importance attached to the quality of teaching.
* To encourage all staff to reflect on the effectiveness of their own teaching and identify their development needs.
* To foster discussion and dissemination of best practice.
* To increase staff awareness of the whole student experience.
* To identify any weaknesses and put in place an action plan to remedy them.
* To support a high-quality educational experience for their students.

This guidance focuses on exploring how staff and colleagues teaching on degree apprenticeship programmes can contribute to the overall inspection framework through robust peer observation for enhancement.

## The approach for Observation of Teaching

This Observation of Teaching guidance for degree apprenticeship courses aligns with the peer observation approach we take for our other course provision. (See [LBU peer observation for teaching enhancement webpage](https://teachlearn.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/development-and-training/peer-observation-of-teaching/)), which ensures we put consideration of all our students’ experience at the heart of our HE teaching and learning practice. This aligns with best practice outlined in the UK Quality Code for Higher Education focusing on the need for opportunities to review and observe teaching through our peers (QAA, 2018, p9).

Our approach (for *all* types of our UG and PG LBU course provision) is specifically focused on peer support for the enhancement of teaching – a developmental, iterative, supportive process designed to integrate constructive feedback to enhance colleagues’ teaching. LBU recognises that a developmental and supportive approach to teaching is the most helpful to the professional development of observers and observed tutors.

The approach for apprenticeship course peer observation aligns with the fundamental principles (HEA, 2006) of focused observation, reflection, constructive feedback and support for development and draws specific attention to certain practice elements regarded as important for quality teaching on apprenticeship courses (see Figure 1).

# General Underpinning Principles

## The general principles underpinning peer observation of teaching of apprenticeship courses at LBU

* Constructive and 'friendly' dialogue.
* The dialogue should be based on evidence observed during the teaching session.
* Focus on the learning experience from the student’s perspective.
* Open to difference in practice.
* Open to discussion, reflective and evaluative.
* Be based on trust amongst colleagues.
* Collegiate and developmental.
* Regarded as part of an ongoing and continuous learning opportunity.

This guidance offers a framework for a safe, collegiate environment for teaching staff to observe different teaching methods in practice and to share their own teaching practice with colleagues with the aim of placing consideration of the apprentices’ experience at the heart of our endeavour.

It is important that all teachers’ practices, on *all* our courses, should be reviewed robustly and the teachers themselves be held to account for the quality of the teaching and learning they provide and the outcomes their apprentices achieve. All teaching colleagues at our university, including the teachers on degree apprenticeship courses, need time and support to participate in high quality professional development as part of our learning community.

The approach also aligns with our University values of inclusion, integrity, teamwork and pragmatism. As with our peer observation practice for all our other educational provision, observation of peer enhancement of teaching for apprenticeship courses is **not** designed to be a policing of performance. The tutor being observed should feel that they could choose to be observed in an area of their practice that they struggle with without concern that this may go beyond the observer/observed tutor relationship.

## The role of the Schools

As with all peer observation for teaching enhancement at LBU, the Schools running the apprenticeship programmes will be responsible for arranging, managing, structuring, and organising the observation of teaching using the common principles outlined above. Within the existing framework at LBU, Schools use different approaches to their peer observation to achieve the enhancement of teaching. Several models are already detailed on our [LBU peer observation for teaching enhancement webpage](https://teachlearn.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/development-and-training/peer-observation-of-teaching/).

These approaches (e.g. small groups of staff) are perfectly adaptable for our degree apprenticeship programmes. Staff will normally observe colleagues from within their own School, although not necessarily from within their own discipline area. Schools can adapt the observation sessions as long as they adhere to the framework and the four stages (below). Schools with degree apprenticeship provision might seek to form a pool of observers who would be well placed to facilitate the sharing of best practice between Schools.

## Terminology

In line with the OFSTED guidance for apprenticeships and for consistency, the **observer** is the member of teaching staff who is often a member of the observed tutor’s same teaching team but may also be an experienced practitioner in another subject area who is able to comment on specific areas of degree apprenticeship delivery and practice. The **observer** is the person who is arranging, observing, conducting, recording and offering feedback on the observed tutor’s session. The **observer** should be a more experienced member of staff and not the observed tutor’s line manager.

The **observed tutor** is the teacher who is teaching on the apprenticeships course and whose practice is being observed. The **observed tutor** can choose who observes their session but should present a clear rationale for their choice of observer.

The **apprentice** is the student studying on the apprenticeship course.

# The Stages in the Peer Observation Process

As with our existing peer observation approach and comparable with the sector, there are four prescribed stages.

Figure 1 – The four stages in the Peer Observation Process

|  |
| --- |
| **Stage 1:** A **pre-meeting** between the observer and the observed tutor.  **Stage 2:** The **observation** of the session itself.  **Stage 3:** A reflective **discussion** identifying areas for practice improvement and practice sharing between the observer and the observed tutor.  **Stage 4:** A formal written **feedback stage** with identified areas of good practice, areas for improvement, identified training opportunities and a timeline to monitor areas for improvement for the observed tutor |

**Stage 1: The pre-meeting**

The observed tutor will work jointly with the observer to:

1. Identify a suitable session to observe with the observed tutor (this could be in person or online, a large cohort or a one-to-one supervision or a group tutorial); the observed tutor may have a clear rationale for the choice of session i.e. might choose a session naturally aligned with the observer’s area of expertise or an observer who can give specific feedback on a session which the observed tutor feels may need development.
2. Review the observed tutor’s planning of the session, its content objectives and teaching materials.
3. Include an informal discussion about the key content of the session and how the session aligns with the requirements of a degree apprenticeship course, including Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours.

Useful prompts may be:

* Curricular and content links to industry and practical skills.
* How the curriculum and its content has been designed to meet the needs of local and regional employers.
* Challenges with remote learning.
* Suitability of the learning environment.
* Group profile and dynamic.
* Current session plan.
* Tracking of the apprentice’s progress.
* Approaches being used to ensure equality, diversity, and inclusivity.
* How engaged the apprentices are and how the participant is capturing their feedback.
* Design of induction sessions.
* End point assessment strategies.

**Discuss** what the observed tutor would like to gain specifically from the observation (e.g. reassurance, confidence, an independent opinion, support, signposting to support, opportunity to showcase innovation).

**Ensure** the observed tutor has the feedback form and is briefed to complete this and bring to the next meeting (or submit online).

**Agree** a time for the post observation discussion/dialogue.

The observed tutor should:

* Consider if there might be areas for their personal development on which they would specifically like feedback.
* Agree the suitability of the chosen session with the observer.

Stage 2: The observation of the teaching session itself (online or face-to-face on campus)

It is expected that observations should be a minimum of an hour long. The observation should be of the full length of the scheduled teaching session and of sufficient duration to allow the desired skills and degree apprenticeship specific elements to be meaningfully observed.

**Excellent teaching of degree apprenticeship courses: The specific focus of the observer in degree apprenticeship course related observation.**

Not all the areas specific to excellent teaching of degree apprenticeship courses (areas a-m listed below) would necessarily need to be addressed in each teaching observation. Some might be regarded as more applicable to different types of session or located/embedded at a specific point(s) in the course.

Figure 2- Elements of quality teaching on apprenticeship courses

|  |
| --- |
| **The observed tutors need to be mindful that observers will be looking to see whether:**   1. Tutors plan the learning activities and experience to enable the apprentices to develop a deep understanding of their subject. 2. Tutors offer or signpost high quality resources to apprentices. 3. Tutors are setting personalised learning targets and monitoring progress of their apprentices and, as part of this, providing precise, formative, supportive and constructive feedback to them. Tutors can evidence that apprentices are progressing and are responding successfully to the academic challenges of the degree apprenticeship framework. 4. Tutors use opportunities in the session to point out career progression opportunities and routes available if appropriate. 5. Tutors are promoting equality and diversity in the teaching sessions and the learning environments and that these are contextualised to each apprentice’s specific professional practice. Tutors use contextualised opportunities in sessions to teach and encourage apprentices to explore ideas relating to safeguarding, Prevent, the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and the mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. 6. Tutors provide apprentices who are approaching the end-point assessment of their degree apprenticeships with good support and guidance to aim for high grades. 7. Tutors make it a priority to get to know their apprentices thoroughly - as a result, they have a very good understanding of each apprentice’s needs, interests and individual workplace experiences. The tutors should use this information effectively in sessions so that apprentices on degree apprenticeship programmes can share and learn from each other’s experiences. 8. Tutors are planning and using learning activities carefully so that the pace and content of sessions motivate and meet the needs of all apprentices exceptionally well. 9. Tutors use learning activities that are suitable for different learning environments (online or in person) and motivate and support the needs of all apprentices to learn. These activities should facilitate the use of the application of theory to practice and should focus on supporting the communication, understanding and improvement of all apprentices’ skills, knowledge and behaviours. 10. Tutors are encouraging apprentices to take responsibility for their own learning and help them develop their confidence, independent learning and critical thinking skills. 11. Tutors have excellent subject knowledge and make very effective use of their professional experience when planning and using learning activities. 12. Tutors offer tailored support and activities to address individual apprentice’s identified areas for development before and after the end point of assessment in order to monitor and improve performance and maximise the apprentice’s learning and success. 13. Tutors are actively supporting the apprentices to participate in learning at a higher level than previously. |

Stage 3: A reflective discussion identifying areas for practice improvement and practice sharing

* The observed tutor and the observer should meet (online or in person) for the post-observation dialogue soon after the session whilst it is still fresh in the mind (within a week).
* The observer should initially ask the observed tutor how they feel the session went.
* Both the observed tutor and the observer should be open-minded about feedback and respectful of difference.
* Constructive feedback – if making suggestions for improvement the observer should make sure they explain why and offer advice on where to get help (e.g. staff development, key contact, signposting to development resources, literature, etc. See *academic staff educational development* below).
* Observed tutors and the observer may choose to feed general themes emergent from the discussion into the School enhancement / teaching and learning / course meetings. This approach can be chosen by the School and discussed by Heads of Subject.
* The observed tutor should be reflective, formulating any professional development goals arising from feedback.

Stage 4: A written feedback stage with identified areas of good practice, areas for improvement, identified training opportunities and a timeline to monitor areas for improvement.

The post-observation discussion between the observer and observed tutor is private and informal but can be captured using the optional template (see *Appendix 1*). The use of this template as it stands is not obligatory and can be adapted to suit the individual School’s approach for degree apprenticeship programmes.

For audit purposes, staff taking part in observations are required to record and report to their School Degree Apprenticeship Lead both the date they observed a colleague and the date they were observed by a colleague. The observed tutor would usually take responsibility for this. This data will also be reported to and recorded by the Heads of Subject.

Heads of Subject should follow up on Learning and Teaching enhancement themes separately or collectively in Schools and feed these back to the Centre for Learning and Teaching (through their annual educational development requirements survey) so educational development can meet the School’s identified development needs.

Each School Degree Apprenticeship Lead is responsible for uploading the record (date, names of participants) of the peer observation session(s) on the OneDrive record established and shared by QAS.

At LBU, teaching observations are a School based enhancement activity and **not** a requirement of our developmental and supportive LBU PDR process. Colleagues are encouraged, as part of their reflection on academic practice (and integral to our DEAP culture) to use the feedback from peer observations to identify proposed learning objectives, action planning and/or development activity which *may* feature in their PDR development aims.

# Academic Staff Educational Development at LBU

## Development of Excellent Academic Practice (DEAP)

Peer observation of all teaching is part of a wider enhancement strategy that further develops our University’s ambition to be pedagogically excellent. Our approach to Developing Excellent Academic Practice (DEAP) is designed to continuously improve teaching and learning and the student experience.

We offer specific staff development opportunities and CPD through our Educational Development Programme to support colleagues teaching on degree apprenticeship programmes offering a space to share and discuss best practice.

At LBU it is expected that all teaching staff engage with our DEAP community in a range of activities provided to enhance their teaching delivery and engagement with their students.

It is important to recognise that increasing pedagogical dialogue has a direct impact on practice, providing teachers with appropriate forums to share and discover new and innovative approaches to crafting pedagogy. Where, through the peer observation process, an aspect of practice is identified as in need of development, colleagues can engage with research-informed resources, guidance and support. The Degree Apprenticeship Lead, Head of Subject or Course Director may signpost the observed tutor to identified development activities. Sometimes a course mentor might work with an observed tutor is indicated.

## Specific support for development of excellent teaching of degree apprenticeship courses

In addition, the University’s Centre for Learning and Teaching (CLT) provides research-informed resources and guidance to support colleagues to develop excellent teaching on degree apprenticeship courses.

These resources are organised as follows (**a - m** refer to the elements of quality teaching listed at *Figure 2* above):

**PLAN: Planning your degree apprenticeship course**

**a)** Tutors plan learning to enable apprentices to develop a deep understanding of their subject.

**b)** Tutors offer or signpost high quality resources to apprentices.

**MANAGE: Managing your apprentices**

**c)** Tutors are setting personalised learning targets and monitoring progress of their apprentices and, as part of this, providing precise, formative, supportive and constructive feedback to them. Tutors can evidence that apprentices are progressing and are responding successfully to the academic challenges of their degree apprenticeship course.

**d)** Tutors use opportunities in the session to point out career progression opportunities and routes available if appropriate.

**SUPPORT: Supporting your apprentices**

**e)** Tutors are promoting equality and diversity in the teaching sessions and the learning environments and that these are contextualised to each apprentice’s specific professional practice. Tutors use contextualised opportunities in sessions to teach and encourage apprentices to explore ideas relating to Safeguarding, Prevent and the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

**f)** Tutors provide apprentices who are approaching the end-point assessment of their degree apprenticeships with good support and guidance to aim for high grades.

**COMMUNITY: Building your apprenticeship community**

**g)** Tutors make it a priority to get to know their apprentices thoroughly- as a result, they have a very good understanding of each apprentice’s needs, interests and individual workplace experiences. The tutors should use this information effectively in sessions so that apprentices on degree apprenticeship programmes can share and learn from each other’s experiences.

**h)** Tutors are planning and using learning activities carefully so that the pace and content of sessions motivate and meet the needs of all apprentices exceptionally well.

**DEVELOP: Developing your apprentices**

**i)** Tutors use learning activities that are suitable for different learning environments (online or in person) and motivate and support the needs of all the apprentices to learn. Activities should facilitate the use of the application of theory to practice and support the improvement of all apprentices’ skills, knowledge and behaviours.

**j)** Tutors are encouraging apprentices to take responsibility for their own learning and help them develop their independent learning and critical thinking skills.

**CHALLENGE: Challenging your apprentices**

**k)** Tutors have excellent subject knowledge and make very effective use of their professional experience when planning and using learning activities.

**l)** Tutors are actively supporting the apprentices to participate in learning at a higher level than previously. Tutors are actively building apprentices’ confidence.

See *Appendix 2* for the LBU learning pathway model as it applies to our degree apprenticeship courses.

# Practical Implementation

## 5.1 Enhancement surveys

Peer observation does not sit in isolation. This scheme is contextualised by our existing Student, Staff and Employer Surveys. These surveys are conducted throughout the year to capture feedback relating to teaching, learning and all students’ experience. Results of these surveys will be analysed at School level and used to identify and reinforce strengths and areas for development, progress of which will be captured via the School plans. These will vary from School to School but broadly encompass mid-module review, induction surveys, module evaluation, NSS Surveys, and employer satisfaction surveys.

## 5.2 How often should peer observation sessions and enhancement take place on degree apprenticeship programmes?

All academic staff teaching on degree apprenticeship programmes are expected to engage with this activity regularly (i.e. at least once a year) with the option to take part more often according to development needs. Colleagues new to teaching apprentices should be encouraged and endeavour to complete a peer observation by the end of their first teaching semester.

## 5.3 Supporting resources

These can be found on an accompanying [Degree Apprenticeships Talis reading list](https://rl.talis.com/3/beckett/lists/506BBFAE-457E-B81E-F3A6-91ACCE8765F7.html) and on our [Peer observation for teaching enhancement webpage](https://teachlearn.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/development-and-training/peer-observation-of-teaching/).

Appendix 1: Observation of Teaching Templates

*This template is provided to facilitate the observation of teaching before, during and after and observation. The observed tutor and the observer may wish to adapt it.*

**Before the observation**

Pre-observation dialogue between observer and observed tutor should explore which criteria are appropriate for the circumstances of the session to be observed. Observations can be used for online or classroom-based face to face sessions and this pre-observation template should be completed by the observed tutor.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **When and where is the session to be observed?** *(Does the tutor want the observer to view the MyBeckett module site prior to the session?)* |  |
| **Module/session title** |  |
| **Details of apprentices** *(give a brief description of what is known about the apprentices including numbers expected) What is the balance between apprentices and standard degree students?* |  |
| **Learning outcomes to be achieved during the session** |  |
| **Brief session outline** *(include any details about teaching methods, resources, assessment & feedback strategies)* |  |
| **Are there any aspects of the session which the observer should focus on?** *(e.g. interaction with apprentices, use of resources, pace, feedback, links to workplace/ career development etc.)* |  |
| **Does the tutor want to include any feedback from the apprentices?** *(if ‘yes’ what format should this take?* [*1*](#_bookmark0) |  |

1 *For example, a relatively quick and easy technique is as follows: the tutor gives students 3 post-it notes. Apprentices are asked to write ‘liked’ on one note, ‘disliked’ on the next note and ‘learnt’ on the final note. At the end of the session the students then give feedback in the form of three points on each post-it note. As the apprentices leave the session, they hand the notes in or stick the notes on a flip chart under the appropriate headings. The observer and tutor can then take this feedback into consideration as they discuss their views of how the session went.*

**During the observation**

Whilst observations should not be a process of checking against a checklist, which cannot encompass all the complexities of the teaching situation, there are some common features that do exist (see *Figure* 2). Some of these may be appropriate to use as a guide to provide feedback.

The session should be focused on the consideration of the overall learning experience of the apprentice facilitated by the observed tutor’s teaching approach and should be completed by the observer.

continued……..

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Planning/organisation**   * Did the observed tutor clearly state the learning outcomes of the session and return to them throughout/at the end of the session? * Did s/he /they set out the structure and plan for the session at the start? * To what extent did the session appear to be well- planned and organised? |  |
| **Methods/approach**   * Were the methods/approach taken suitable to achieve the learning outcomes set and Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours? * If appropriate was clear monitoring of targets/ progress undertaken? * What other alternative approaches could have been taken? * Were examples given to link theory to practice? |  |
| **Delivery/pace**   * Did the tutor alter the pace of delivery for different apprentices’ capabilities? Were any aspects dealt with too briefly and/or with too much elaboration? * Were there suitable opportunities for discussion, critical thinking and promotion of independent learning? |  |
| **Participation of the apprentices**   * Were apprentices given the opportunity to apply the knowledge to their own workplace context? * How effective were the participatory elements of the session in building the confidence of the apprentices? * To what extent did participation enable the tutor to check the apprentices' understanding of the material/approach? |  |
| **Use of learning resources**   * How effective was the use of visual aids e.g. PowerPoint etc? * Were they signposted effectively, clearly produced and accessible? * To what extent did the resources contribute to the session or detract from it? * If applicable, to what extent did the MyBeckett site and resources support the session? |  |
| **Use of the learning environment**   * How effectively did the tutor use the learning environment and demonstrate an appreciation of the impact it had on learning? * For online sessions, how effectively did the tutor utilise the digital environment to engage apprentices? |  |
| **Overall style and ambience**   * Did the tutor appear confident in delivery? * Did the observed tutor convey enthusiasm? * Was the tutor clear and audible? * Did the session seem to "go well"? * Was there good rapport with the apprentices? * Were the apprentices attentive/bored? * Did they engage with the session and have opportunities to improve their knowledge skills and/or behaviours "? * Did the tutor have good presentation skills? * Did the tutor seem sensitive to the "mood" of the apprentices? |  |

Additional notes:

**After the observation**

Following the observation, it is important for both observed tutor and the observer to take some time to reflect on how the session went, and to prepare for the post-observation discussion which should take place within a week of the observed session. If feedback has been sought from the apprentices after the session this should also be taken into consideration. Feedback provided during the post-observation discussion is confidential and should remain focused and constructive, encouraging reflection from both perspectives.

**Good feedback will:**

* Allow the observed tutor to describe the session and say how they felt it went before the observer makes any further comment. The observed tutor might reflect on whether the observation process had affected the session in any way, for example, in his/her behaviour or that of the apprentices.
* Focus on particular issues rather than allow generalised description or evaluation.
* Positively state what the observer considers the tutor to have done with skill, insight, competence, etc. The observer will provide evidence or instances of any claims made.
* Identify what did not appear to be so successful, or any areas in which some difficulties were observed. Again, it is important that specific evidence is cited as the basis for discussion.
* Provide adequate opportunity to discuss any matters of concern to the tutor about the session or about the observation process in an atmosphere of trust and confidentiality.
* Provide an opportunity to identify constructive solutions to any agreed issues, including sources of professional educational development and support.

Notes:

Appendix 2: The LBU Learning Pathway Applied to Degree Apprenticeship Courses

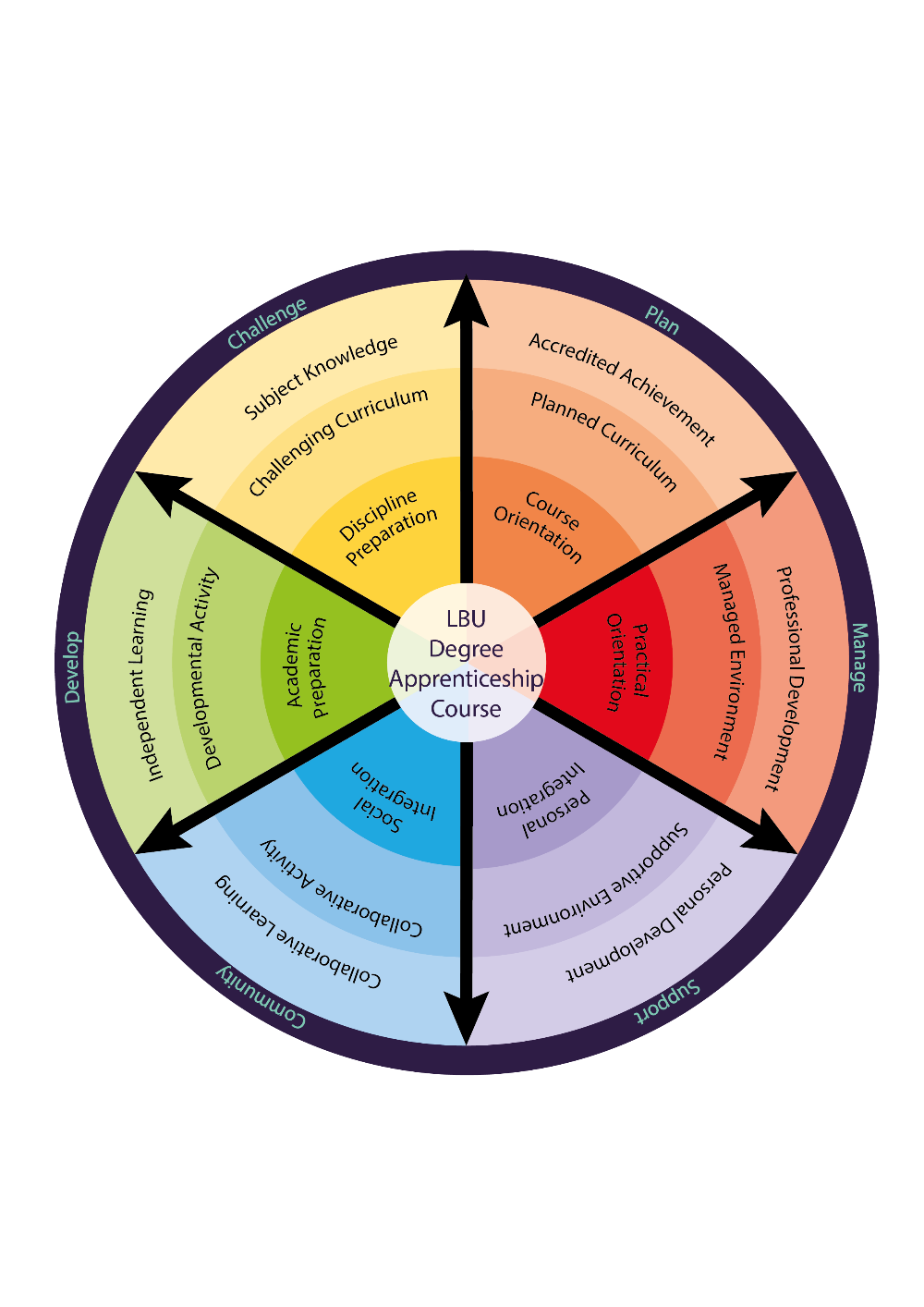
LBU’s degree apprenticeship courses are designed to scaffold:

* students’ transition into their course;
* students’ engagement throughout their course and
* students’ progression from their course into employment.

through

* planned, challenging curricula;
* supportive, managed learning environments and
* collaborative, developmental learning activities.

Figure 3 - LBU Learning Pathway for Degree Apprenticeship Courses



(Pickford, 2018).

Underpinning development resources <https://teachlearn.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/the-learning-pathway/>.

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